3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

III. FAMILY LIFE.

When a young man wants to marry, he himself asks the girl he has selected; if she assents, she directs her lover to her parents and the old people of the village; if these also do not object, they ask him to bring the dowry, which consists of cattle. From four to six head of oxen and one milch cow is the ordinary price for a woman, besides a number of sheep and goats. But the whole of this dowry is in most cases not paid to the father-in-law at once, before the marriage takes place. One ox is paid to the elders of the village when they arrange the marriage business, one or more at the celebration of the marriage, another when the first child is born. The ox which is slaughtered at the marriage festival is driven to the village of the bride by all the young men of the bridegroom's village. They decorate this ox by tying tassels of cows' tails on the top of the horns. In case the horns have not a good shape for tying these tassels, they are pierced and the tassels are fastened in the holes. A young man in buying an ox is always particular about the shape of the horns for this reason. On the marriage festival vide page 109. — A man cannot reach a social position without being married, and he cannot get a wife without cattle; so every young Shilluk's highest ambition consists in procuring cattle in order to buy a wife. But, as already mentioned, they usually marry before the full dowry is paid, and in such a case the debts of the young husband may become the source of quarrels between husband and wife, and still more between husband and father-in-law. As long as the price is not paid, the father has a legal right to take his daughter back from her husband; but this, though often threatened, is seldom done. Those who have sufficient means will as a rule not be satisfied with one wife, but marry a second and a third; only a very few exceed this number.

MARRIAGE

A young man may not marry a girl from his own division or clan, (vide page 127 ff.) but from any other division; the girl may live in the same village or in any other village, but they prefer to marry in a distant village. These marriage laws are a well established tribal custom, and people fear to break them, lest death follow marriage.

The position of the woman is no doubt a higher one than with most Mohammedan peoples of the Sudan. She is generally well treated and is shown remarkable respect. The women sometimes take part in public assemblies with the men, discuss the affairs that interest them and partake in dances and religious ceremonies. Even in their war-dances the women play an active *rôle*, vide page XXXIX. — If refractory or lazy, the man may give his wife a thrasing with a rope.

POSITION OF WOMEN

592 there may be a dependent relative or friend. A man's sons live in his homestead until they get married; if their father is dead, they live in the *gol* of their eldest brother or in that of their father's married brother. The owner of the homestead is the head of the *gol*; he holds the cattle belonging to the unit and is responsible for the behaviour of the members of his *gol*. He has to pay cattle in compensation for any wrong which may be committed by any of the members.

[679]

The Hamlet (pac)

34 Hamlets are built about 100 yards apart on high ground parallel to the river. They vary considerably in size according to the number of homesteads which compose them. The homesteads of a hamlet are grouped round a cattle kraal containing a hut which shelters all the herds in the rainy season. The byre and hut are used as the general meeting-places and social centres for the inhabitants at all times and guests are entertained there. There is often a *geu*, a hut with no surrounding fence, which is used as a dormitory by the unmarried men. The hamlet is a homogeneous unit being an extended family group or a small lineage.

[862]
62
[613]

The Settlement (pouth)

[36] The settlement consists of a number of hamlets, occupied by different lineages. There are several hundred settlements, often not spacially distinct from one another. There is, however, a structural division which is recognised by the people themselves in referring to the settlement units. In spite of lineage differentiations within each settlement, all unite to defend the whole, all take part in the ritual of the age-set organisation, all participate in the settlement's relations with other settlements and all acknowledge a common chief.

● 554 The lineage organisation within a settlement revolves round two recog-
613 nised types of lineages: the *dyil* and the *seuh*. It is said that Nyikang,
62 the Shilluk culture hero and founder of the present Shilluk tribe, origi-
[173] nally granted each settlement to a clan. The surviving descendants of the grantees are considered the 'owners of the soil' and are termed *dyil* to distinguish them from lineages which settled on their land later and which are called *seuh*. If the original owners of the land are extinct, the *seuh* lineage next in importance takes their place and becomes *dyil*. The members of the *dyil* lineage are closely associated with the land they occupy and are accorded considerable prestige and authority in virtue of their position and this association. The *dyil* form the core of the settlement and political activities revolve round them. The *seuh* lineage members are not socially inferior, but the *dyil* lineages have greater prestige and are expected to be the leaders in important matters in the settlement. For this reason the *dyil* of a settlement is the 'dominant lineage'.

[629] The chief of the settlement, the *rago*, is taken from the *dyil* lineage. In practice, it occasionally happens that the dominant position of the *dyil* lineage is taken over by a stronger, wealthier, and more numerous lineage but, even if dispossessed of political power and the chieftainship, the original *dyil* lineage retains its ritual connection with the soil and also much of its local prestige. This ritual relationship remains so long as any living representatives of the original *dyil* lineage remain.

having a great number of local branches, or lineages, spread throughout Shillukland, and there are no periodic reunions.

Members of a lineage are bound not only by kinship ties but also by ties arising through occupation of the same territory. The lineage is an effective political and social unit. A person generally thinks in terms of his localised lineage and refers most often to the founder of his lineage in the district occupied. In relation to members of lineages of other clans, however, reference is most likely to be made to the founding ancestor of a person's clan. As previously mentioned, the occupants of a settlement belong to a collection of independent lineages which graft themselves onto the genealogical structure of the dominant lineage through marriage with its female members.

INHERITANCE

Only the smallest lineage unit is of any importance in the inheritance of property. Pumphrey states that there are no definite rules for the inheritance of chattels.(1) If distribution has not been made before death they are usually taken by the eldest son, or by the next of kin where there are no sons. Cattle are taken by the succeeding *gol* leader, either a married son or a married brother. He cannot do exactly as he likes with them for he inherits certain traditional obligations. He has the moral obligation to use his herds for providing bridewealth to enable the male members of the *gol* to marry, in order of seniority, and it is considered wrong for a *gol* leader to marry a second time himself while there are men of his *gol* still unmarried and requiring cattle. The *gol* leader is also responsible for paying compensation in cattle for any wrong which has been committed by one of his household. Finally, it is recognised that no cattle of the family herds should be sold except in times of famine and to purchase grain. Pumphrey states that a breach of these terms of trust would "be universally censured but would probably not be interfered with by the courts."(2)

Uncultivated land belongs to anyone who settles on it.

MARRIAGE

The Shilluk are polygynous; a wealthy and influential man has three or four wives, while members of the *kwareth* may have several more. Marriage is forbidden with any member of one's father's clan and between all persons in respect of whom relationship, either through the father or mother, could be traced directly. Apart from these obstacles it appears that freedom of choice is generally allowed to both sexes in matrimonial matters.

Bridewealth

Bridewealth consists of ten head of cattle and sheep and spears. In addition the suitor makes small gifts and performs services to win the favour of his future father- and mother-in-law. Bridewealth discussions and arguments proceed between representatives appointed by the suitor's *gol* And by the girl's gol.

(1) Pumphrey, *S.N.R.* 1941, Vol.XXIV, p.24.
(2) *Ibid.*, p.23.

9:Howell E-5 (1937-1950) 1952 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

year round and only the youths go to the cattle camps in the riverain pastures, which are never more than a few miles from their villages. The Shilluk are not a pastoral people in the sense that the Nuer and Dinka are, and rely to a much greater extent on agricultural products and on fish, for they are skilled and experienced fishermen. Since their migration to their present territory, it is probable that they have never had a very large cattle population, for their riverain pasture is not extensive.[1]

Shilluk clans[2] are not territorial in basis for they are highly segmented and widely distributed throughout the settlements of Shilluk country; as corporate units they have no real significance except at times of national festivals, and then only in the sphere of ritual and ceremony.

The Shilluk are divided into four main classes or groups of clans:

(i) The *kwareth*: the royal house, who trace descent from Nyikang and from whom the *reth* of the Shilluk is chosen.

(ii) The *ororo*: a disinherited branch of the royal house who do not differ from commoners except in the special functions they perform at the installation of the *reth*, during his lifetime, and at his death. They are a distinct exogamous clan, though they may intermarry with the *kwareth* despite common ancestry.

(iii) The *collo*: the name refers collectively to the main body of the Shilluk clans of which a large number trace descent patrilineally from (*a*) the original followers of Nyikang, (*b*) individuals of other tribes who have migrated and settled in Shilluk country from early times onwards, and (*c*) ancestors who are lost in antiquity, but who may have occupied Shilluk country before the arrival of Nyikang.

(iv) The *bang reth*: the personal attendants of the *reth*, his wives or wives of past *reths*; the descendants of royal slaves obtained by capture; those who volunteer to serve him by reason of their possession by the spirit of Nyikang,[3] and paupers who volunteer for this form of service in order to exist at all. Finally, there are the alleged descendants of those who were enslaved because their close kinsmen committed homicide, though this statement must be examined more critically later.

There are no real caste distinctions between *kwareth*, *ororo*, *collo*, and *bang reth* and, apart from restrictions on the marriages of daughters of a living or past *reth*, they intermarry freely. The *kwareth*, however, by reason of their connexion with Nyikang and subsequent *reths*, are treated with special respect and this extends to those *bang reth* who have close association with the shrines of Nyikang or of dead kings. The Shilluk basic social structure is very similar to that of the Nuer and Dinka, though there are important differences. The segmentation of the population into territorial units and of the clans into localized lineages has, however, a greater permanency and stability. The distinctive feature of the Shilluk political structure is the existence of an established and theoretically omnipotent monarchy and it is in the political sphere

[1] An accurate census taken during the veterinary campaign against trypanosomiasis gives a figure of 23,000. This was after a very severe epidemic in 1946 and it may be assumed that they had lost at least 30 per cent. of their stock. A human census, accurate at any rate within 15 per cent., gives a population figure of 110,000. The ratio of human population to cattle population is therefore between 110·5 and 110·25. Cf. Nuer where highest ratio given is 112·3 and the lowest 111·2.

[2] *kwo*: Literally 'descendants of', prefixing the name of the clan. '*kwo* Okelo'—the descendants of Okelo—and so on.

[3] Often now attendants at the many shrines of Nyikang.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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possesses no chief as such. The clans have in fact disintegrated over the face of the country, so that not only will clan "A" be distributed over several settlements, but one settlement will contain detachments of several clans. A detachment of clan within a settlement has been termed a "lineage" by Mr. Howell and will be so termed in this note.

THE SETTLEMENT (PODH).

The word *podh* is as elastic as the English "home" or the Arabic "dar." It can describe the entire Shilluk country, a settlement or a group of settlements. Properly however it designates the settlement, which is a group of villages, containing several lineages, agglomerated for purposes of mutual defence and owing allegiance to a common chief. The settlement is the basic element in the indigenous tribal structure.

The country is divided into some hundred settlements, varying in size from Kodok which contains more than 600 adult males to others containing less than 100. Geographically they are divided by lines approximately at right angles to the river.

Each settlement contains, in microcosm, the administrative difficulties of the tribe. For the settlement, which appears at first to be a purely territorial unit, is really a collection of different lineages. These lineages, welded together by threat of war, are apt to be dissident in the present time of comparative peace and although they owe allegiance to their common chief they sometimes feel and pay more to the lineage head within the settlement. There is, in fact, in the settlement, as in the whole tribe, a conflict between the loyalties due to the territorial unit and those due to the submerged but ever existing clan.

It is said that Nyikang originally granted each settlement to a clan. The descendants of the original grantees, if they survive, are considered the owners of the soil and are termed *dyil*, to distinguish them from subsequently immigrating lineages, described as *wedh*. Naturally the lineage of the original grantees is often extinct, in which case the next senior lineage in the settlement becomes *dyil*. In theory the *dyil*

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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554 lineage should provide the chief. Expediency, however, requires
613 that the chieftainship shall follow local strength, or in other words
621 local numerical superiority. Thus, with a certain inevitable lag,
622 the lineage which is most numerous within the settlement tends to dispossess the *dyil* lineage of the chieftainship[10] of the settlement. Nevertheless the *dyil* lineage, even when dispossessed of the chieftainship, retains a certain local prestige as owners of the soil and its opinion always carries extra weight in debate. Some settlements have an interesting arrangement whereby the chieftainship goes to two or three lineages in turn (*e.g.*, Odong Fanyikang).

361 Within the settlement each lineage has its original hamlet (*pan*
613 *dwong*)[11] subservient to which are the subsequently formed hamlets
621 of that lineage within the settlement. The chief of the *pan dwong* (*i.e.*, the lineage head within the settlement) represents his lineage in the politics and administration of the settlement. The hamlets of one lineage are not necessarily grouped together in the settlement.

613 With a strong settlement chief the lineage loyalties are largely
621 submerged in the *esprit de corps* of the settlement. Conversely when
622 the chief is personally weak or belongs to a lineage which is numerically small the latent lineage loyalty raises its head and the administration of the settlement suffers accordingly.

The Hamlet and the Homestead.

[613] Unlike the settlement each hamlet (*pac*) is a homogeneous unit
621 in the sense that a hamlet contains only people of the same lineage. Some hamlets are very small, consisting of a single homestead, while others may contain fifty. In any case the hamlet is no more than an enlarged family group. The homesteads are arranged in roughly

10. The *lau* (meaning sheepskin) is the insignia of chieftaincy. The name has been transferred to the strip of cloth which each chief receives, usually from the *Reth*, on his appointment.

11. *Pac* = hamlet. This word assumes the forms:
pan when followed by a qualifying adjective.
pa when followed by a genitive.
Its plural is *myer*.

17: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1938) 1941
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CHAPTER III.

The Elements of Shilluk Society.

565 The four elements existing to-day in the tribe are *Kwar Reth*, *Ororo*, *Collo* and *Bang Reth*. The first two together comprise all the patrilineal descendants of Nyikang, the last two the subject body of the tribe. There is no outward difference between the members of these four strata of society either in physique or apparel, and although the *Kwar Reth*, and less so the *Ororo*, are usually treated with a certain outward defence by the *Collo*, little of the original practical difference between conquerors and conquered now survives. Numerically the *Collo* vastly predominate. The *Kwar Reth* are simply an enlarged clan and account for perhaps a fifteenth of the tribe[12]. The *Bang Reth* are perhaps a little more numerous than the *Kwar Reth*, and the *Ororo*, who are as will later be seen a mere segment of the *Kwar Reth*, are numerically negligible.

The Kwar Reth.

565 614 644 [625] The *Kwar Reth*, like any other clan, is diffused over the country. It has no political authority as such but exists as a disjointed aristocracy, physically indistinguishable from its *Collo* neighbours, sometimes providing the settlement chief, but more often not. The Shilluk clan being exogamous the *Kwar Reth* cannot intermarry. Accordingly, with the exception of the *Reth's* daughters who cannot marry at all, they inter-marry with the *Collo* without restraint. Most, though not all of the *Reth's* wives are *Collo*.

554 565 614 644 Within the *Kwar Reth* there are four higher titles. These are *Reth* for the reigning king (who must be a son of a previous *Reth*), *Nyireth* for the son (or daughter) of a *Reth* (reigning or dead), *Nyareth* (or *Nyinyireth*) for a son of a *Nyireth* and *Kwar Nyireth* (elided into *Kwanyreth*) for a grandson of a *Nyireth*. Strictly every member of the *Kwar Reth* has a claim to the title *Kwanyireth*, but in fact its use is restricted to the grandson of a *Nyireth* and any remoter descendant who has achieved some political eminence.

12. This is necessarily a very rough estimate.

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With the exception of *Reth*, these titles must always be prefixed to the name of the person addressed. Alternatively the title alone may be used.

The *Kwar Reth* is vastly bigger than any other clan. The reasons for its abnormal growth are two, namely their comparatively great wealth with the consequent tendency to marry more wives, and the cunning process of dissemination whereby the *Kwar Reth* have been gradually planted out and have taken root in every part of the Shilluk kingdom. It is this latter process which will now be described.

The *Reth* has many wives,[13] most of whom live with him at Fashoda. When one is about to give birth she goes to her own village where the *Nyireth*[14] is born. As soon as he is weaned he is "planted out"[15] into the charge of some reputable *Collo* chief[16] who becomes responsible for his upbringing. In the hamlet of his adoption the *Nyireth* grows up and while small herds the sheep and cattle and plays with the village boys as an equal. When he reaches the age of marriage he builds a separate village nearby which will be known as *Pa Nyireth* and will be the village of the *Nyireth's* descendants. As the descendants of the *Nyireth* increase this original *Pa Nyireth* will put forth offshoot villages in the immediate neighbourhood, and thus we see the process whereby the *Kwar Reth* is planted out takes root and grows in an area owned by a *Collo* lineage. It is by this continually repeated process that the *Kwar Reth* have been and continue to be disseminated throughout the country. Each branch of the *Kwar Reth*, once planted, grows alongside the local *Collo* lineage and tends to eclipse it. Rivalry results, and often the *Kwar Reth* attain to such numerical superiority that they oust the *Collo* lineage from the chieftainship, whereupon the latter either move elsewhere

13. The wife of a *Reth* is known as *bareth*.

14. It is here assumed that the child is male, though *nyireth* covers either sex. If female she will be similarly planted out but of course she will found no lineage.

15. *pidh* (used also for planting out cuttings in a flower bed).

16. The chief entrusted will often be the *bareth's* brother. In any case he cannot refuse this trust which will bring him certain temporary benefits such as milk cows for the *Nyireth's* nurture but which will probably result eventually in his descendants being made subservient to the lineage of the *Nyireth*.

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565 644 [614] who served the *Nyireth* in his life upon terms analogous to those under which *Bang. Reth* served the *Reth*. After the *Nyireth's* death the *Bang Nyireth* also continued as a fictitious clan. Consequently beside a branch of the *Kwar Reth* are usually found *Bang Nyireth* who are the descendants of the retainers of the *Nyireth* who is the head of that lineage of the *Kwar Reth*.

The *Bang Reth*, whether *Bang Reth* or *Bang Nyireth*, are by origin *Collo*. [554] Yet their status is slightly inferior to that of the "free" *Collo* and they have therefore been treated as a separate element in this note. The inferiority of their status springs from the fact that they do not belong of right to the area in which they live. They are therefore newcomers, and priority of occupation of land is of great importance to the Shilluk.

CHAPTER IV.

Political Divisions and Organisation.

The Provinces of Luak and Ger and the Old Order.

635 [622] The settlement has already been described as the basic element in the tribal structure. The settlement chiefs, with few exceptions, are appointed by the *Reth* and this has always been the case. Between the *Reth* and the settlement chiefs there were, before Turkish interference, four high chiefs. The country was then divided into two provinces, Luak in the south and Ger in the north, which were alternatively called *Gol Nyikang* and *Gol Dhiang* respectively[26]. The bound-

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173 26. The terms *Gol Nyikang* and *Gol Dhiang* are a bit archaic and are only heard on ceremonial occasions such as the rebuilding of Fashoda. The origin of the name Gol Nyikang is clearly the tradition that the southern half of the kingdom was settled by Nyikang himself, coupled with the fact that it contains his great shrine at Nyilual. As to the origin of "*Gol Dhiang*" (meaning literally the Gol of the Cow) I am indebted to Mr. L. W. Raven for the following:

"On the death of *Reth* Dhokoth the Shilluk did not accept his son Tugo and called back the "queen" Abudok who had previously ruled after the death of Buoc and had resigned to make way for Dhokoth. Tugo had been living at Athokong and now, with all his father's cattle and retainers, moved to the north and first founded a village at Fadiang, just south of Kodok. Later he built and gave its name to Fashoda. He was followed by the northern chiefs, who had probably not been consulted in the recall of Abudhok. Abudhok then came to meet him at Fashoda, they were reconciled, and Abudhok again resigned. At that meeting Tugo brought a bull to present to Abduhok, and she slaughtered it and in doing so named the north, that is from the Nyigir boundary, as "*Gol Dhiang*," the *gol* of the bull (just then killed). Later Tugo settled his retainers in what is now Golbah, and the chief of them he made responsible for the north and so head of *Gol Dhiang*."

tiresome to those who encounter them, do not merit discussion. Subordination and obedience are not in themselves virtues. That the Shilluk are often highly insolent to those in authority is undeniable. This insolence usually takes the form of a supercilious silence and apparent complete disdain implying that "diplomatic relations have now been broken off." This attitude is really not exactly what it seems. In fact it is suppressed rage; but since their symptoms of temper differ from our own we are inclined, often wrongly, to think that it is pure calculated insolence.

The Shilluk have a code of manners which is remarkable. This is instilled into them when young. Even as neatness and order prevail within their houses so are the children taught good manners. When four or five years of age they are made to sit up straight at meals and eat properly. These good manners remain with them through life and distinguish their bearing from that of neighbouring tribes. Doubtless it is in part an empty form but the fact remains that the Shilluk manners are excellent, and their way of sitting in a meeting with their legs drawn backwards to one side and the soles of their feet concealed from view is very neat. No smoking is tolerated at such meetings and their general tone is orderly.

There is a habit, when listening to a superior speaking, of punctuating his remarks with a formal indication of assent. The word thus used varies with the speaker, and is most obvious when the speaker is the *Reth*. Here the word is either *kite kwan* ("the likeness of his ancestor," *i.e.*, Nyikang) or *Kunajuok* ("God's last born"). For members of *Kwar Reth* the word is *Kaiyo*, for the *Ororo* it is *Nyagol* and for some reason for the *Jung* clan it is *Dhiang*.[1]

It has already been explained how certain members of the *Kwar Reth* must be addressed by their titles or with their titles prefixed to their names. There are also certain respectful modifications which must be made to normal speech when speaking to or about the *Reth*, a *Nyireth*, or anyone of importance. These modifications relate largely to verbs of motion. The fiction has to be laboriously maintained that such

1. *Kaiyo* means "eldest born," *Nyagol* means "one of the family" and *Dhiang* means, literally "cow."

the more distant settlements, owing to the length of the populated area, is not very much shorter. Most parts of Shilluk country are accessible to the inhabitants even when the water-courses and swamps are full, but travelling is not easy and social contact consequently less frequent in the rainy season. The result of such periodic inconvenience of communication and the length of inhabited country are twofold. In the first place, in the past at anyrate, the immediate power of the central authority the *Reth*, was slightly diminished and he was more dependent on the loyalty and competence of the settlement chiefs. Second, difficulty of communication increases the isolation of the settlement and intensifies the feeling of unity within it. Moreover, the clan, having no territorial basis, is put to a further disadvantage. The settlement thus gains importance socially, economically and politically in the structure of the tribe.

The formation of the settlement is based on a particular association of lineages and its structure can only be understood after a searching examination of their position. The fission of clan segments, individual enterprise and migration has been frequent for a very long period of Shilluk history. In each settlement there are therefore both indigenous elements and newcomers. Mr. Pumphrey has explained in outline the position and significance of the *Dyil*.[1] They are fundamentally associated with the land they occupy, and theoretically they enjoy great prestige and authority. Among most primitive peoples the fixation of sentiment on land is bound up with human interests and those who are more closely bound to it acquire special functions and prerogatives not accorded to newcomers. Besides their ritual association with the land, the *Dyil* have obligations and observances of primary importance in the social machinery of their settlement and they form the centre round which internal political activities revolve. Subsequent accretions known in Shilluk as *Wedh* normally hold a position of political subservience to the *Dyil*. It must be emphasised here, that this implies no social inferiority; it merely means that the *Dyil* are expected to take the lead in matters of importance to all inhabitants of the settlement. The *Jago* is usually the chosen representative of the *Dyil* lineage and holds the *Lau Dwong* of office Mr. Pumphrey has pointed out that

[1] [Dyil are the descendants of the people who originally received grants of land from Nyikang. - Analyst]

554 613 621 this is not always true in practice, for the *Dyil* authority is frequently usurped by a later but more numerous element, sometimes by a lineage of the *Kwar Reth*. Even when this has occurred, the *Dyil* retain some of their rights and their especial relation to the land is not forgotten. They appear to have prior right to speak at a meeting of the local court; "let the *Dyil* speak" is a common saying at a legal discussion. However, newcomers who have taken over the position of authority seek to establish a ritual and traditional background for the power and prestige they have acquired and it is a tendency among the Shilluk for these newcomers to claim and assume the title of *Dyil* even if they are not. For example, in the settlement of *Yom Dhok-Alal* which is described in more detail below, the *Kwar Nyimol* have assumed the *Lau Dwong* though they have no traditional right to it, and they claim rather unconvincingly that they are the *Dyil*. Actually there are many lineages who have been in occupation of the settlement for a much longer period. *Kwar Oring* is said to be the oldest and is now represented by a single old man who is blind and near the end of his life. He lives with his married daughter at *Adod*, the smallest and most insignificant of hamlets. Even *Kwar Oring* is not descended from the original and autochthonous element, for there were older lineages who have died out or migrated in a body to other parts of the country. This will be the fate of *Kwar Oring* after the death of the sole representative. Although recognised as the oldest resident lineage in *Yom Dhok Alal*, there is no evidence that they ever held both the title of *Dyil* and authority over the other lineages.

The dominant lineage which gains undisputed authority through long association with the territory, or acquires the position through numerical superiority, is thus collectively the nucleus of the settlement round which other lineages group themselves. The *Jago*, their chosen leader, is the most important, though not necessarily the eldest, representative of that lineage and he is also the chief of the settlement. He is indeed in the nature of a common bond between the inhabitants, for through him social and political equilibrium is maintained. It follows that the occupants of a settlement are bound together, not only by proximity and common interests, but by an attitude of obedience to the

621 622 613 182 554

chief and by their special relations with the lineage which holds authority over them. Thus there are social, political and economic influences backed by common residence which promote unity and emotional security, and patterns of behaviour arise entirely distinct from those which characterise the kinship group.

The balance of loyalty to settlement or to kin is difficult to define. The lineage resident in one locality is clearly the most significant unit of society. Blood relationship is closer and co-operation is intensified by daily contact and mutual interests. All the factors which make for peace and mutual help in the settlement are not sufficient to break the ties which unite the local lineage. Loyalty, obligations and observances are greater towards a blood relative who is also a neighbour than towards an individual who is a neighbour only. The corporate unity of the lineage is kept alive by kinship which is a biological fact and the observance of exogamy and all the complicated obligations raised in marriage do not allow the Shilluk to forget. The extended clan, however, in which relationship may be so remote as to be fictitious, is not cemented together by lasting and mutual interests, nor are old associations renewed by periodic reunion. Even so, the traditions of the clan are to some extent maintained and the rule of exogamy is not broken however scattered its members

The Shilluk settlement consists of a number of hamlets *Myer*, (*Pl of Pac*,) each occupied by a lineage. The settlement has a varying number of distinct lineages resident therein, but each hamlet is exclusively occupied by a kinship group. Each hamlet is a separate cluster of huts which are built along the high ground parallel to the river bank. The distance between each varies from a hundred yards to a mile or so. The hamlet is not constant in the number of its huts and grows or diminishes in size according to the increase or decrease in numbers of the lineage which occupies it. Mr. Pumphrey has explained that off-shoots from hamlets are continually being initiated by enterprising young Shilluk who, having married, wish to build a home for themselves away from the parent hamlet. Sometimes these off-shoots (*Nyole Myer*) are started in other parts of the country, more usually within the settlement and not far from the birth-place fo their founder.

18: Howell E-5 (1937) 1941 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

881 with girls. This man ceremonially ties on the youths dancing ornaments before he enters the dance and accompanies him to the dancing ground.

On the morning of the *Cong*, the candidate is taken with his companions to an *Ajwogo* or priest who performs certain rites with them before they continue on their way to the gathering. On their arrival at the village where the *Cong* is being held, the initiates form up two abreast and remain in the charge of their sponsor until the actual dancing begins. After this they enter the dance in the normal way, joining the ranks of the warriors who have certain acts of politeness to the *Jago* to perform before they are chosen as partners by the girls.

535 881 [534] The *Cong* takes place about four o'clock in the afternoon when the heat is less oppressive and the population of the district has finished work in the fields. The drum (often two, "*Bul Dwong*" and "*Bul Thin*") is placed on a wooden structure in the centre of the village. The drummer begins to call the local inhabitants together long before any dancing is due to take place and beats furiously on the drum at varying intervals. Women and those who are too old to dance assemble round the huts, gossiping and drinking merissa with the occupants. [554] The important men of the settlement, the *Jak* and their assistants and a few of the most respected elders assemble near to the hut of the *Jago* who offers them refreshment and tobacco. Meanwhile the warriors arrive in small batches, and stand outside the village. The normal [291] "*Lau*" of cloth is discarded and they put on skins fastened from their waists and ornament themselves with their special dancing beads and sashes. They carry with them their best spears, but not the fighting [411] shield, for the *Cong* has no military associations. Some have small [714] shields of hippo or crocodile skin make in miniature imitation of the heavy war shield, but the majority carry parrying-sticks or "stick-shields." Some wear strings of small bells wound crosswise round [301] their legs.

When the final touches have been put to their clothing, small groups of warriors enter the dancing ground in the centre of the village, shouting as they come. They shamble and jump round the drum and then disperse in small groups, while other warriors are assembling. When large groups have collected, after more salutations to the drum,

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they advance in formation towards the *Jago's* hut, quicker and quicker until in a wild rush they fling themselves as one body before the chief. When all the warriors have saluted the *Jago*, they retire for further rearrangement of their dress and this time they put away their spears. Armed with sticks and small shields only, they form a circle, two abreast round the drum. The girls now appear on the dancing-ground, and in two's or three's wander round the circle of waiting men, choosing their partners by a point of the hand or a discreet nod of the head. The choice of a partner is entirely the prerogative of the girl and the man has no say in the matter. He cannot refuse. It is a point of honour to the initiate that he should be chosen by some girl, for to dance with a girl is part of the ceremony and if ignored he would be the subject of many sarcastic witticisms afterwards. 535 881

Warriors and their partners then arrange themselves in groups of eight or ten, the men two abreast facing the girls who always dance backwards. In the actual dance, these groups advance anti-clockwise, hopping on both legs in time to rhythm. The head is held erect, the men with their arms flexed, holding in one hand a dancing stick, while the girls dance with their hands at their sides. There is no variation of this formation, other than an occasional raising of the hands above the head by the group as a whole.

While the dance is proceeding, the audience is entertained further by various individuals who greatly to their own enjoyment imitate animals or individuals of neighbouring tribes. The Shilluk are born mimers and every conceivable trick is devised. Thus at one *Cong*, the on-lookers were amused to see the arrival of a wild and unruly bull accompanied by two exasperated herdsmen who eventually succeeded in lassoing it, after it had charged and scattered the crowd. In another corner a hyena was craftily dragging away an old mat representing the corpse of a goat. Current events are also acted and although the side-shows have no connection with the *Cong Bul* itself, they are very popular with the guests and those who are clever at miming enjoy great prestige. 535 536 881 [554]

The *Cong Bul* lasts for about two hours. Shortly before sunset the drum ceases to beat in rhythm and the exhausted dancers hastily 535 881

476 561 to be their duty to aid him. The arrangement is merely reciprocal. At the beer feast afterwards, however, the guests are arranged according 476 to their respective sub-divisions. The two senior sub-divisions present 561 enter the hut of their host before the others and it is their privilege 574 to taste the beer first and approve it. They remain in the hut for sometime for they have had an exhausting day in the fields and are thirsty. Outside the hut in the courtyard are grouped the lower sub-divisions, eagerly awaiting their share which is passed out to them when those inside are satisfied with the quality of the beer. Possibly another sub-division is then allowed to enter the hut if there is room at the back.

The sub-divisions are grouped inside the hut in ascending order of seniority and the leader of the senior sub-division present, (*Pagy*) [264] sits near the door. The *Pagy* has a special gourd which is kept full of beer by the man next him. Etiquette is rigidly observed and every- [562] one is careful to sit in the right place and take his turn at the beer. [533] No women are present except the host's wife or wives who sit at the back and serve the beer. Every age-set has its own song and this is sung by those inside the hut while the young men outside take up the chorus.

The existence within the settlement of organized age-sets limited 561 by territorial boundaries is a factor which should ensure co-ordination 571 and peace between the different lineages. The Shilluk say that age- 578 mates will not fight each other. In fact this is an exaggeration for the sense of loyalty and mutual obligation between age-mates is not constant or strong. The reason for this is the rarity of occasions in which the age-set organization functions to-day and the very limited purpose to which it is put. In reality, mutual ties and observances practiced by age-mates are quite outside the deeper and more permanent ties of kinship and the Shilluk is not bothered by perpetually conflicting emotions. The age-sets do not operate as such until all lineages are bound together by a common cause apart from and in a different context to internal bickerings which are not infrequent.

Political authority is not now derived from the age-set system, 554 613 but from the powerful position in the settlement of the dominant lineage. 621

26: Pumphrey G-5 (1934-1937)1937
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SHILLUK "ROYAL" LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS.

By M. E. C. Pumphrey.

THE Shilluk divide themselves with great distinctness into two divisions, namely "Royal Blood" (Shil., KWAR RETH) and "Shilluk" (Shil., COLLO). KWAR RETH includes, with the exception of a single distant branch called the "Ororo," all the living patrilineal descendants of the semi-mythical but historical Nyikang Okwa, who, in about 1540, is supposed to have led a party from the neighbourhood of Wau into the present Shilluk country.

Within the KWAR RETH there are three higher titles. These are *Reth*, for the reigning king; *Nyireth*, for the son of a king, reigning or dead; and *Nyareth* or *Nyinyireth*, for the son of a *Nyireth*. All other members of the KWAR RETH are entitled *Kwar Nyireth*, which is elided into *Kwa'nyireth*. All KWAR RETH should be addressed by prefixing their title to their names or else by the use of their titles alone, an exception to this last being that you never address the Reth as *Reth* but use the appellation *Wuo*.

The Shilluk say that they found the Fung in the present Shilluk country and that they drove them out northwards. Undoubtedly, however, many remained as an inferior caste, and there are still traces of a Kwar Funy (Funy clan). The remaining Fung, together with the reputedly small band of Shilluk who accompanied Nyikang, presumably form, with subsequent accretions, the ancestors of the COLLO. Nyikang and his sons are the ancestors of the KWAR RETH.

When using the Shilluk language it is important not only to use the proper title when addressing a member of the KWAR RETH but also to make certain deferential modifications in some words and expressions. Only some of these modifications are necessary when addressing a mere *Kwa'nyireth* (largely those of implying divine intervention in all verbs of motion), but when addressing the Reth certain fictions have to be borne carefully in mind.

For example, the *Reth* and, less rigorously, District Commissioners and their assistants do not sleep. Strangely enough, they go out to graze (Shil., *kwai*). They never exist unaided. When not more specifically

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29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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of frenzied barking, as all the mongrels in the place, suddenly galvanized into life at the appearance of a stranger, give tongue to their displeasure and make a concerted rush with the evident intention of tearing me to pieces. I shout to one or two youths loitering near and ask them to call off the dogs, but to no avail, so I seize a stick and get in a telling smack or two on some which have ventured too near, and disperse the rest with a few well-aimed lumps of cotton soil. They retreat to a safe distance barking and growling threateningly, but at least I can make my way into the village in peace. There is little astir; a few men squat near the cow byre gossiping while one lies prostrate on the ground with the village hairdresser anointing his hair with a mixture of red mud, oil and ashes as a preparation for building it up into an elaborate coiffure. Most of the women have not yet returned from their daily trudge to the river for water, but the spirals of smoke rising from behind the reed fences which surround the individual homesteads indicate that some of the more industrious housewives have already begun to prepare the morning meal. A group of small children, pot-bellied and large-eyed, soon run to surround the Father and his bicycle; gravely they scrutinize him and his mount while some shyly offer him the customary Shilluk greeting, '*Yi bi*—You have come'. The bolder spirits among them venture to come closer to investigate the wonder of his wrist watch, putting their ears against it to hear its ticking with smiles of amazement and delight.

The children follow the priest as he wheels his cycle across the open space to where the knot of idlers is sitting near the cattle byre. The village chief who is among them rises courteously to greet the white man; '*Jal duong*,' he says, '*Yi nin*: Great one, you have slept.' I answer him in accustomed fashion, '*Yi nut*: You are here,' and then each man of the group greets me separately and receives his answer. I seat myself in the place of honour on the chief's mat and smoke a cigarette with him, discussing the prospects of the crops and making enquiries about certain ones in whom I am interested. Soon I excuse myself and go off in search of my

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
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mony?' asked the priest. 'Once,' promptly answered the catechumen, and then cautiously amended his answer, 'perhaps twice.' 'Oh,' said the Father, 'why only twice?' 'If a man marries and his wife dies, he can marry again, can't he?' 'Ye-es,' conceded the boy, 'he can marry again.' 'And if that second wife dies,' continued the Father, 'can't he marry a third time?' 'No,' said the boy. 'Why not?' 'Because he has no cows left' was the triumphant and conclusive reply. And that fairly well sums up the Shilluk's attitude towards matrimony. In common with the rest of his African brethren he is by inclination polygamous. In Africa nothing adds more to one's prestige than a multiplicity of wives. Fortunately, however, from our—the Catholic missionaries'—standpoint the tribe as a whole is of necessity monogamous. Except in the case of wealthy chiefs or fathers who rejoice in a quiverful of daughters to bring cattle into the family byre and no sons to take them out, the people generally are too poor to be able to scrape together the necessary cattle to provide for a second wife.

When a man dies his wife is not thereby released from her matrimonial obligations and free either to re-marry or to remain a widow. She is, as has been said, something that has been bought and paid for, part of the dead man's property, and is inherited together with the rest of his effects. If she is not the mother of the deceased's eldest son he will claim her, or if she is his mother or there is no son, or none old enough to marry, she will be taken by her brother-in-law or some other member of her husband's family. She belongs to that family and must remain in it to fulfil her duties as a wife and a mother to some member of it. If it so happened that there were no relative, no matter how remote, of her husband who could inherit her, then she might marry again outside it, but only on condition that a dowry is forthcoming to compensate her husband's family.

* * *

A death among the Shilluk is the signal for an outburst of wailing on the part of the women. It is a high, shrill, screaming